

foresee and provide for all emergencies, and the nurse must, to the best of her ability, deal with these as they arise. It follows that it is most essential to the public that their nurses should be highly skilled, and reliable, and the value of a really good nurse is impossible to estimate. Unfortunately the danger to which the public is subjected at the present time is considerable. Probably because it is one of the best paid branches of work, possibly also because indifferent work will pass muster more easily than when the nurse works under the constant supervision of an expert Ward Sister or Matron, it is a fact that large numbers of women drift into private nursing who are discarded by the training schools as incompetent, and by whom the public are very indifferently served. The result of this is apparent in two directions: (1) Work which should afford openings for thoroughly trained certificated nurses on the completion of their hospital course is, to a considerable extent, absorbed by inefficient and unsuitable women, and (2) the efficient nurse, who does her utmost for the patient, has to meet on equal terms, on opposite duty, the partially trained woman, and all her careful work may be rendered useless by the ignorance of her co-adjutor. In no profession is it fair either to the public or the skilled worker that trained and untrained should compete on equal terms, and in the case of nurses whose efficiency, or inefficiency, may turn the balance in regard to saving or losing a valuable life, it is of special importance that it should be possible to discriminate between those who are expert, and those who are amateur, by means of similar tests to those applied in the case of other professions. This is only due also to the large numbers of private nurses who, working for the most part on co-operations and in connection with nursing institutions, are invaluable and indispensable to the public in sickness.

MENTAL NURSING.

An important branch of nursing is that of the care of the insane, and the mentally afflicted. It must always be related to general nursing inasmuch as the mental patient often suffers from other diseases, besides those of the brain and nervous system, and therefore the person selected to attend him must be conversant with the principles and practice of general nursing. But there is no doubt that mental nursing is a highly specialised branch, and that it demands in those who undertake it the very highest qualities. It is through the employment of skilled nurses, male and female, who study the individuality of their patients, and who regard

the "mind diseased" with sympathy instead of repulsion, that our asylums for the insane have ceased to be the prisons which they virtually were in former days, when the employment of mechanical restraint, now practically unknown, was an everyday occurrence, and have developed into hospitals for the treatment of diseases of the mind. There can be no worthier ambition for a life's work than the relief of the sufferings of the mentally afflicted.

THE PAN-ANGLICAN CONFERENCE.

Nurses had their own special meeting at the Pan-Anglican Congress, which was largely attended, and which was pronounced by some members of the Congress to be the most interesting of all the meetings. One definite result was that Dr. Hume Griffiths, who stated that for eight years he had been trying to find a nurse to help him in Turkish Arabia, had several offers from nurses present, who listened to his appeal.

SCOTLAND.

The visit of the Secretary of State for War to the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, to present prizes to the nurses in May last, was a recognition of the importance of the work of nurses in the body politic. Mr. Haldane drew attention to the fact that the sphere of nurses is rapidly widening, and that more and more they are being called to intervene in the affairs of State and of public life, and predicted that as years go on the demand for their services will largely increase.

The examination instituted by the Local Government Board for Scotland for the nurses under its control has been held at Glasgow University and Glasgow Western Infirmary, conducted by medical men and Matrons, and affords evidence that the need is felt for systematic methods of training and certification of nurses.

So far, Scottish nurses have no professional association in which they can take counsel together, and through which they can express their collective opinions. This is greatly to be regretted, and we hope that nurses in Scotland will not for long be content to be behind the nurses of England and Ireland in this respect.

IRELAND.

In Ireland both the Matrons and the Nurses' Associations have been active in furthering the interests of the nursing profession. Lectures have been organised and well attended, social functions have been arranged and much appreciated, and, in connection with the Nurses' Association, a debating society has been founded, which must prove of both interest and benefit to the members. The President, Miss Ramsden, and the officers and members of the Irish

[previous page](#)

[next page](#)